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Bard

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Euer Magnificenz, Verzeihung!

**It stays in mind.
The servile apprentice
holds his ground
with magniloquence.
The chutzpah of politeness,
unanswerable. Call me
by simple words
the Master might have said,
But “Beg pardon, your Magnifence!”
is simple enough. To announce
the coming of the strangers
who always carry from Iran
mysterious dissertations
meant to lead astray
all but the Unknown Chosen
who have no time
for such chicanery, all
the blood spilled in the name
of truth, when truth, famously
naked, famously alone,
is sobbing under an almond tree
her skin like the pale
opacity that forms on yogurt,
also called the skin.
The Unknown Chosen pass**

**and greet her, offer
tissues to wipe her tears
candy bars and Chinese apples
but make no claim, smile
and leave her to her business.
Which is grieving for us
sinners sick with so much language.**

13 October 2014

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**The evidence mounts up
around the hoofs of the impala
shot in Boer War time and stuffed
and still standing in the hallway
but in shadow. No one is proud
of such relics now. But tenderly
history must be unpieced,
unmasked, defanged. The story
has its own meaning, listen
and then try to forget. This
is the purpose of memory,
to rinse the sweetness out of
this present moment, lest
we fall in love with it and stay.**

14 October 2014

= = = = =

**If I had only one thing left to say
it would be cantilever. Or maybe
semaphore. Or watch the courses
of old brick lose their mortar over
so many years of rain and ivy.
Maybe that's what I meant to say:
rain and ivy wash the world away.**

14 October 2014

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**Men make bricks but God makes stone
said Maurice Nicoll and when I was a child
I did think there was something wrong
with brick houses, something impious
especially when I saw them in the country
where wood and stone made most
of what I saw and was taken to inhabit.
A brick house was like a city bus
churning smoky through a forest.
But now I like them, what does that mean
about me, thrill to the lovely dirty rose
of English houses, even the scuzzy
properties back of the allotments
you see from the train on the way west,
but mostly the sun-burnt rose walls
round hidden gardens, walls the birds
have baptized and lovers blessed.**

14 October 2014

LA MÉTHODE

**The synchronies
know best
how to touch
flame to the wick**

**the word
to the mouth it exits from,
the articulate wind
to the patient ear.**

14 October 2014

MASTERS

**Rejoicing in shadow
how a leaf knows
or heart when to stop—**

**such goings on
we are!**

**A weave
of continuities
so little space between
web and weft, and yet
some teach us to see.**

14 October 2014

BYZANTION

**Generate a field
and dwell through it
nine centuries or say
you did and do, who
would dare deny
the evidence of grass
around your feet,
the original ancient
sky above your head?**

14 October 2014

SUNRISE

**something happening
to the sky
through trees
white fire
it makes me remember
a time before time
a time before me.**

15 October 2014

BROKELAND

**where I was born
over the opaque green river
close to the clean ocean
never was blue when I looked
always the white foam of arrival
always looking for me
when you are a child
things keep coming at you
waves words attitudes
creatures of the night.
How did we manage
to survive? To drive
my own root silence
through the heartland
of their language and you
know who they always are.**

15 October 2014

= = = = =

**And if later you asked me
which one of them was me
of course I couldn't tell you
I was the rain as much as the pale
sidewalk it fell on, claimed
nothing, hoped for explanations.
Still am hoping. Childhood
is a disease that never ends.**

15 October 2014

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It was playful
I was not. We lived
together, boy and house.
The stairs were hard
the bed was hot,
ivy dimmed the window
and the sky was very far.
I never knew how
much was enough,
things break and spill
the way they do
and I am guilty of all
their imperfections.
Things are perfect
till I come along.
The sun was aimed
at me and the snow
a long forgiveness.

15 October 2014

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**How little they know me,
the ones who know me best —
how little there is of me to be known.
I am a seashell that once heard the sea.**

15 October 2014

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I keep exaggerating
the other side of anything.
There must be more
than this I keep saying,
turn it over, pass
to the other side, be a bird
in this fenced world,
be a kind of light
shows through the cloth —
tulle let it be,
dream glimpse of strong limbs
as of a dancer
someday soon
about to leap.

15 October 2014

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Gap in the pattern —
soul looks in through it
so you finally see yourself
out there,
 not in here, this
heap of meat you think is me.

15 October 2014

= = = = =

**The vitality of the undesired
amazes. From trees,
underground streams, birds,
forgotten relatives it arrives.
It gibbers at the door.
If you're lucky you're not home.
Otherwise a tedious
interview with otherness
ensues. Dirty cups
you find in the sink.
Out-of-town newspaper
left under the bed.**

15 October 2014

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**Once a year
they blow the leaves away
or once a day.
I think it's raining
but you can never tell,
it's all evidence
for an absent theory,
think of something fast
before the leaves
blow away by themselves.**

15 October 2014

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**We wear bodies
to give each other.
Why would we need
them for ourselves?**

15 October 2014

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**The governor
is a voyeur. He peers
through your bedroom money
where you, like any miser,
count and re-count the body
of your wife,
lover, husband, he
doesn't care, just
wants to know
the inmost boredoms
inmost raptures
of your life
expressed as money
he can tax.**

**Taxation is a sexual perversion
prying into private places
to make you pay
for his vile useless things
like flagpoles and monuments
congressmen and war.**

16 October 2014

= = = = =

**That was a Picasso sketch
a girl turning into a machine.
All these are sketches,
no paintings anymore,
paintings need walls
and there are no walls
only cells inside cells
down to the last breath.**

16 October 2014

